

Man's Relation to the Land

A Statement of Principles which shall underlie our national, state and individual actions

• We hold:

God created the world, of which the earth is a portion, with a purpose, and through his loving Providence He maintains the world for the good of human beings. Therefore, all human beings possess a direct natural right to have access to created natural resources.

God's intention in creation is to enable man to live with dignity in accord with his noble nature and destiny, to develop his personality, to establish and maintain a family and to be a useful member of society. Society exists to fulfill these aims.

The Good Earth

The land is God's greatest material gift to mankind. It is a fundamental source of food, fiber, and fuel. The right to use such elemental source of life and development is essential for human welfare. No law or contract is superior to natural law. A fundamental human right is not to be denied or rendered ineffective by an legal ordinances, apparent previous rights or obligations.

Stewardship

Land is a very special kind of property. Ownership of land does not give an absolute right to use or abuse, nor is it devoid of social responsibilities. It is in fact a stewardship. It implies such land tenure and use as to enable the possessor to develop his personality, maintain a decent standard of living for his family and fulfill social obligations. At the same time, the land steward has a duty to enrich the soil he tills and to hand it down to future generations as a thank offering to God, the giver, and as a loving inheritance to his children's children.

The Family and Land

Since the family is the primary institution, access to land and stewardship of land must be planned with the family unit in view. The special adaptability of the farm home for nurturing strong and wholesome family life is the reason for the universal interest in land use and rural welfare. A unique relationship exists between the family

and the vocation of agriculture. The farm is the native habitat of the family. The family's welfare must therefore have the first consideration in economic and social planning. Throughout the history of the United States these fundamental principles have been worked out through national and state legislation, and they have been upheld by court decisions and popular acclaim.

Land Use and Human Welfare

Efficiency in land is not to be judged merely by material production but by a balanced consideration of the spiritual, social and material values that redound therefrom to person, family and society. The land is not to be a source of benefit to a favored few and a means of servile labor to the many.

Second only to making land available to the family is the responsibility of society to encourage and to educate the land stewards in the proper and most efficient use of the land and in such techniques as will make them masters of their own economic destiny.

The Tiller's Rights and Duties

The worker on the land and his family possess the first right to the fruits of their toil for a decent standard of living. Second to such right come the rights of any non-operating owner and of the state. Rural people have the right to receive directly their just share of the economic, social and religious benefits in organized society.

The stewards of the land owe sacred duties and obligations to God, the community and humanity. A faithful and honest fulfillment of their responsibilities goes hand in hand with their rights and privileges.

Suggested methods for the practical application of the declared principles on land policy:

1. Make use of the land an integral part of socio-economic planning and thinking.
2. Insist that education for land stewardship and the productive home be outstanding features of rural education.
3. Emphasize a special program of

enlistment and training in secondary, liberal arts, technical and professional schools for professional service to the rural community.

4. Make the family-type farm operated by the owner a major objective of legislation and planning.
5. Reform the system of taxing land and improvements so as to facilitate access to natural resources, security of tenure and proper land use.
6. Revise land sale and rental contracts, mortgage obligations and other debt instruments so that no loss of ownership or insecurity of tenure be possible except through negligence or injustice on the part of the farmer-operator.
7. Discourage large land holdings as undemocratic and unsocial.
8. Where large-scale production is necessary and advisable, encourage the use of cooperative techniques with local ownership and management.
9. At all times encourage cooperatives as a means of intellectual, moral and material advancement.
10. Where and when large-scale industrialized farming exists and requires employment of seasonal or year-round labor, demand for such labor group a living family wage, decent housing conditions and collective bargaining.
11. Urge that wages and housing for the laborer on the small farms be decent and just. (Low wages and poor housing for the farm laborer tend to lower the reward and standards of living of the family-type farmer, bringing his own family labor into competition with the poorly paid hired hand.)
12. Extend social security provisions, particularly health, old age and survivors' insurance, to farm people and other rural dwellers.
13. Develop locally owned and controlled business and industry in rural communities.

14. Encourage development of the "one foot on soil and one foot in city" type of living as greatly advantageous to the family when adequate cash income is secured from work in industry or commerce.

15. Make land settlement possible for returned soldiers and displaced war workers through proper financial and educational planning, provided qualified people so desire and sound arrangements can be made.

(All individuals signed in their personal capacities)

Alphabetical Listing

The Roman Catholics signing:

REV. A. J. ADAMS, S.J.
Campion High School
DR. THOMAS J. AROENEAUX
South Western Louisiana Institute
FRANK BRUCE
Publisher, Milwaukee
MRS. ALBERT EISELE
Farm Homemaker—Rural
Columnist, Blue Earth, Minn.
MOST REV. WILLIAM A.
Griffin, D.D., Bishop of Trenton
REV. GEORGE G. HIGGINS
National Catholic Welfare Conference
PROF. EMERSON HYNES
St. John's University
REV. JOHN LAFARGE, S.J.
Editor, AMERICA
VERY REV. HUBERT LERSCHEN
Regional Director of Rural Life,
Rayne, La.
RT. REV. MSGR. L. G.
Ligutti, National Catholic
Rural Life Conference
WILL LISSNER
THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF
ECONOMICS & SOCIOLOGY
RT. REV. DONALD A. MCLEAN
Professor, Catholic
University of America
PROF. WILLIAM J. McDONALD
Catholic University of America
MOST REV. WILLIAM T. MULLOY
Bishop of Covington
RT. REV. MSGR. JOHN O'GRADY
National Conference of
Catholic Charities
MOST REV. EDWIN V. O'HARA, D.D.,
Bishop of Kansas City, Founder of
National Catholic Rural Life
Conference
REV. CHARLES PHILIPPS
St. Mary's Church
Oakland, Calif.
REV. PATRICK T. QUINLAN
Regional Director of Rural Life,
Brookfield Center, Conn.
REV. JOHN C. RAWE, S.J.
Author and Teacher
Ridge, Maryland
MARTIN L. SALM
Dairy Farmer
Chilton, Wis.
REV. MARTIN E. SCHIRBER
O.S.B., Dean, St. John's University,
Collegeville, Minn.
EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
Editor, COMMONWEAL
JOSEPH J. TRAINER
Sales Manager, Roller Bearing
Company of America
REV. JOSEPH V. URBAIN
Pastor, Millville, Ohio
DR. LYDWINE VAN KERSBERGEN
Grail Workers, Loveland, Ohio
REV. LEO R. WARD
Notre Dame University

MOST REV. CHARLES D. WHITE
Bishop of Spokane
DOROTHY WILLMANN
The Queen's Work
St. Louis

The Protestants signing:

DR. JOSEPH ACKERMAN
Farm Foundation
REV. O. O. ARNOLD
United Brethren in Christ
JAMES C. BAKER
Bishop, Methodist Church
DR. O. E. BAKER
University of Maryland
REV. EDWIN L. BECKER
Disciples of Christ
REV. J. BURT BOUWMAN
Michigan Council of Churches
and Christian Education
E. R. BOWEN
Cooperative League of the U.S.A.
REV. LEONARD M. BRAAM
Reformed Church in America
DR. MARK A. DAWBER
Home Missions Council
of North America
DR. WILLIAM V. DENNIS
Pennsylvania State College
REV. FRANCIS A. DRAKE
Friends of the Soil
REV. SHIRLEY E. GREENE
Merom Institute
STANLEY HAMILTON
Rural Life Association
REV. HILDA L. IVES
N. E. Town and Country
Church Commission
REV. JOHN B. KETCHAM
International Council of
Religious Education
DR. BENSON Y. LANDIS
Committee on Town and Country
DR. KATHLEEN MACARTHUR
National Board, Y.W.C.A.
DR. HENRY W. McLAUGHLIN
Presbyterian Church in the U. S.
REV. I. W. MOOMAW
Church of the Brethren
DR. HERMANN N. MORSE
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
REV. DONALD F. PIELSTICK
Home Missions Council
of North America
DR. HENRY S. RANDOLPH
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
JOHN H. REISNER
Christian Rural Fellowship
DR. MARK RICH
American Baptist Home
Mission Society
REV. CLIFFORD L. SAMUELSON
Protestant Episcopal Church
DR. MARTIN SCHROEDER
Midwest Synod, United Lutheran
Church in America

DR. ROCKWELL C. SMITH
Garrett Biblical Institute
REV. CLAUDE J. SNYDER
Evangelical and Reformed Church
REV. WILLIAM H. STAUFFER
Mennonite Church
DR. F. P. STOCKER
American Moravian Church
DR. THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP
Congregational-Christian Churches
DR. A. J. WALTON, SUPT.
Dept. Town and Country Work,
Methodist Church
REV. RALPH L. WILLIAMSON
New York State Council of Churches
REV. O. L. WILLITS
Town and Country Dept.
Ohio Council of Churches
REV. RALPH L. WOODWARD
Yale Divinity School

The Jews signing:

DR. GABRIEL DAVIDSON
Jewish Agricultural Society
RABBI MAURICE N. EISENDRATH
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
DR. LOUIS FINKELSTEIN
Jewish Theological Seminary of
America
RICHARD S. GOLDMAN
Jewish Agricultural Society
RABBI HERBERT S. GOLDSTEIN
Synagogues Council of America
RABBI FERDINAND M. ISSERMAN
Commission on Justice and Peace,
Central Conference of American Rabbis
MAURICE JACOBS
Jewish Publication Society of America
DR. ISAAC LANDMAN
Editor, Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia
DR. SOLOMON LIPTZIN
College of the City of New York
DR. JULIAN MORGENSTERN
Hebrew Union College
RABBI STEPHEN S. WISE
Jewish Institute of Religion
DR. JOSEPH ZEITLIN, RABBI
Temple Ansche Chesed, New York

• The foregoing statement was made public on August 24, 1945 by Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa; Dr. Benson Y. Landis, Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council of North America, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the International Council of Religious Education, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.; and Dr. Gabriel Davidson, The Jewish Agricultural Society, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

• Additional copies of this printing may be secured from the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies 3 cents each; \$1.00 per hundred; \$5.00 per thousand.